



T · H · E

Bryker Woods

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Newsletter of the BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association

Fall 2007 Vol. 25

Annual Meeting of the BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association

Saturday November 10th

9:30am at BrykerWoods Elementary

Topics of discussion: Neighborhood Planning,
"Traffic Calming" and the latest updates on MoPac

Refreshments will be provided! Share your thoughts and concerns about the
Various issues affecting the quality of life within the neighborhood.
Visit <http://www.brykerwoods.org> for additional information.

Central West Austin Neighborhood Plan

The City-sponsored neighborhood planning process got underway on June 21, 2007. The City's goal is to create a City Council approved plan, the central feature of which will be a long term land use map for a large West Austin area that includes Bryker Woods. Our goal is to make sure that the plan as a whole and the land use map in particular protect Bryker Woods so that it remains a great place to live.

The planning process involves a series of town hall type meetings or workshops where folks who live, work, or own property in the planning area get together under the direction of the City and discuss issues and try to reach agreement as to how problems should be addressed, and whether or how land use changes should be permitted in the future. Issues such as cut-through traffic, future development along 35th St., MoPac expansion, and whether and where new commercial, duplex and multi-family developments will be allowed are being discussed and debated. We want to make sure that

Bryker Woods is fairly represented in these discussions and our neighborhood interests honored in these decisions.

Several meetings have been held but the hard work is still ahead of us. There is no draft plan on the table and critical decisions have yet to be made. It is not too late to get involved! For more information, check out the City planning website http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/central_west_austin.htm or contact Michael Curry at mcmmediate@msn.com

The BrykerWoods Neighborhood also now has a blog! Visit the website <http://www.brykerwoods.org> and subscribe to the neighborhood RSS feed and/or the BrykerWoods email listserve.

State of the BrykerWoods Neighborhood

What makes the Bryker Woods Neighborhood so desirable? Many will argue that it is more than the central Austin location. Beyond the proximity to the University and downtown, it is the elementary school, the parks and greenbelts, the charming homes and the historic neighborhood. Quite often people also comment on the neighborhood “character” - such as the homes, streetscape & trees. These neighborhood attributes are frequently the reason that people choose to live in the Bryker Woods neighborhood. Ironically, some of these desirable neighborhood qualities are threatened as result from being such a great neighborhood. Obviously the Bryker Woods neighborhood would be a much different place were the streetscape to consist of tightly spaced town homes each with a front yard privacy fence or wall.

Bryker Woods is a neighborhood that “works”. Although functional and highly desirable, the neighborhood does have some significant threats to the quality of life we all enjoy. Namely the current threats stem from redevelopment and traffic. Currently Bryker Woods like many older central city neighborhoods is experiencing a variety of insensitive construction projects. Some of the new homes built are frequently out of scale and intrude on neighboring properties. Traffic has always been an issue for Bryker Woods (especially since the construction of MoPac) and as Austin has grown, the problems associated with cut-through traffic have gotten much worse. The intensified redevelopment of West Campus will only exacerbate the problems associated with existing cut-through traffic. An additional threat and an area of historical concern is the potential commercial encroachment from Seton Medical complex and the 35th street corridor. It was these threats that led to the creation of the Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association (aka BWNA) almost 25 years ago.

Neighborhoods undergo change and change is not necessarily bad. Some demographic trends for the Bryker Woods neighborhood look promising. Compared with census data collected over 10 years ago, the percentage of families with school age children has increased. This is a strong sign for our central city neighborhood. A trend that will continue to prove challenging is the cost of homes and the associated property taxes. Although never guaranteed, property values in Bryker Woods have continued to rise. Other assumptions that are potentially erroneous are static neighboring properties and the ability to transform a purchased property into an immense home. The pleasant view from your kitchen window and the privacy in your back yard are not necessarily guaranteed – although the new McMansion ordinance does help. Also not guaranteed is the right to build a massive urban loft on a lot formally occupied by a small neigh-

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BWNA Board Membership - 2007

President: Edward Tasch
Vice President: Amy Friday
Zoning Chair: Joyce Basciano
Secretary: Polly Lanning Sparrow
Treasurer: Bill Woods

Members at Large - 2007

Derek Barcinski
Michael Curry
Harry Mallard
Irene Pickhardt
Randy Schrecengost
Tom Shefelman
Margaret Tenny
Tracy Warren

The BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association (BWNA) is now 24 years old and serves as an advocate for protecting and maintaining the quality of life within the Bryker-Woods neighborhood.

Top ten reasons to join the BWNA:

- The City is considering a light rail station at 35th & MoPAC
- MoPAC could possibly be widened
- A Neighborhood Plan can help keep BrykerWoods livable
- Shoal Creek and Greenbelt clean-ups
- Traffic-calming advocacy
- McMansion ordinance enforcement
- Get to know your neighbors at events like 4th of July parade
- Sidewalks in Brykerwoods
- Historic Zoning advocacy
- Learn what’s happening with noise walls along MoPAC

Historic and recent calls to action:

- Limit encroaching commercial development in sections of the neighborhood bordering the 35th street corridor.
- Fought to keep a 6th grade class at BrykerWoods Elementary
- Had installed neighborhood traffic calming devices on Jefferson to help reduce cut-through traffic speed
- Protect the neighborhood form the expansion of the MoPAC and 35th street corridors
- Had installed neighborhood sidewalks such as the one along 29th street down to Lamar.
- Contributed and actively defending the historical character of the neighborhood
- Created a website respected city wide for informative and rich historical content

BrykerWoods Neighborhood Association

2008 Membership Form

Yes! I want to join the BWNA I want to renew my BWNA membership!

I have enclosed my 2008 annual dues for:

\$5 retiree household membership \$10 regular household membership
 \$50 BrykerWoods Friend \$100 BrykerWoods Supporter

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please indicate which topic or topics are of interest to you:

Communications/Newsletter Trees Neighborhood social gatherings
 Traffic/Safety Neighborhood parks & greenspaces Zoning Issues
 Historic Preservation Transportation & Sidewalks Neighborhood Plan

Please mail this form
along with a check to
the following address:

<p>Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association (BWNA) c/o Bill Woods 3211 Funston Street Austin, Texas 78703</p>
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(President's message continued from page 2)

borhood cottage. What you can expect and what you can do with property in Bryker Woods fall somewhere in between. All property within Bryker Woods is zoned SF-3 and it behooves everyone to learn what can and cannot be done when remodeling and rebuilding.

Bigger homes are not always better. Many families are choosing a smaller home for a more central Austin location. The emphasis is quality over quantity of house. Bigger homes require bigger lots and most lots in Bryker Woods are relatively small in size. It is precisely this reason that the massive new homes are viewed as intrusive and insensitive to neighborhood character. Speculative and "flipped" homes invariably present the most egregious examples of the McMansion phenomena. Forfeiting scale and context in deference to profit margin, these massive homes are of concern for many neighborhood residents. An additional concern is the loss of more "affordable" houses within the neighborhood. The resulting prices of the huge homes are such that only the very well off can move into the Bryker Woods neighborhood – pricing out all but the wealthiest of families.

What direction should the Bryker Woods go? What ever direction, residents and property owners should have a say in the process. Currently the Bryker Woods neighborhood is undergoing a city neighborhood planning process - our neighborhood is part of the Central West Austin Planning area. The process is inclusive and provides opportunity for residents, property and business owners to all have a voice in what direction they want the neighborhood to take. Contemporary, tightly spaced lofts? Period homes and streetscape? Or a combination of both? Regardless of direction, neighborhood residents and property owners should have a say in the process.

Many Bryker Woods residents value the historical aspect of the neighborhood. Those interested in preserving the neighborhood streetscape and period homes, now have the ability to create Local Historic Districts. Such a city of Austin designation requires a majority of property owner support. The resulting code has enforceable remodeling and building guidelines. Data from other historic districts around the

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country show that property values do NOT decrease in value – most districts continue to appreciate quite well because of demand for centrally located period homes of modest size with good schools. I encourage everyone to talk with your neighbor and discuss what direction you think Bryker Woods should go (especially with regard to housing) and act. All neighborhoods evolve. And some neighborhoods choose the path of preservation just as others choose the path of dense urban development.

Actions Bryker Woods residents can take are many. When remodeling and/or rebuilding exercise sensitivity and respect for neighboring property owners. Of course small homes built over 50 years ago will need to be enlarged and remodeled to accommodate growing families. Scale and not style is most important however. A current trend in housing places an emphasis on the quality of living space over the quantity of living space. Context is also quite important as the Bryker Woods neighborhood is part of a National Register Historic District (Old West Austin) and many residents value the style of the neighborhoods period cottages.

Residents can also help keep an eye out for illegitimate building activity within the neighborhood. The city of Austin does not have the staff to adequately patrol and monitor building activity and some developers are notorious for exploiting the lack of permit compliance. Should you see a project and have questions, look for a posted building permit and research city website's permit database. And should you see a permit or building violation alert the city immediately by calling 311. Protection of the neighborhoods tree canopy is also something in which we all can participate. Replanting and care of existing trees will not only help preserve an important neighborhood attribute but also help mitigate the city's heat island effect. Furthermore shade is a precious commodity during the long hot Texas summer.

We pay high taxes to live in Central Austin and the quality of life we enjoy is vulnerable. Become involved in the neighborhood in some capacity. The Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association (BWNA) is always looking for more participation. The ongoing city neighborhood planning process is an excellent way to help ensure the neighborhood maintains qualities you enjoy as well as make improvements. Vote in the upcoming city council elections - select a candidate that represents your interests for central Austin neighborhoods. Should you have children in a neighborhood elementary school, consider becoming more involved if not already. Our schools are some of the best in town and they are vital to our neighborhood. Lastly, take a walk in the neighborhood. Get

out and experience Bryker Woods. We are after all incredibly fortunate to live in such as desirable urban neighborhood.

More information on neighborhood issues may be found at <http://www.brykerwoods.org>

All the best,
Edward A. Tasch

A very special thanks to Allegra Printing, Joyce Basciano, Derek Barcinski, Michael Curry, Cord Dover and Margie Tenny for thier help with producing this edition of the BrykerWoods Hearld newsletter.

Sewer Line Work on Mohle Dr. & 29th Street

You might have noticed protective fencing and other environmental controls being placed in the neighborhood. Project scope includes installation of 8-inch wastewater pipe to replace existing 6-inch wastewater pipe on Mohle Drive, and W. 29th Street; and 8-inch wastewater pipe to replace existing 8-inch wastewater pipe on Oakmont Blvd. Wastewater lines to be replaced are plagued by one or more of the following problems, and will be abandoned after the new wastewater lines are installed: root intrusion, cracks, stormwater infiltration, collapsed pipe, missing pipe, holes, and dropped joints, all of which increase the probability of sanitary sewer overflows. The project is part of the Austin Water Utility's Austin Clean Water Program (ACWP), which was developed to respond to the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency's Administrative Order regarding sanitary sewer overflows. Contact Information Don Willhouse, P.E., Project Manager, ACWP (Phone: 512-474-5500)

Recent Neighborhood Improvements

- ⇒ Sidewalk installation on 29th Street and Kerby Lane
- ⇒ Improved neighborhood pedestrian crossings
- ⇒ New #19 bus stop and public green space improvements
- ⇒ BrykerWoods residential ACWP sewer project
- ⇒ Shoal Creek ACWP tunneling project (restoration and revalidation scheduled to be completed in spring 2007)
- ⇒ tightened SF-3 building regulations to help prevent massive and intrusive "McMansions"

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MONAC / MoPac update

Sample sound walls have been erected at TxDOT's Bull Creek campus (across from Westminster Manor). What remains to be done at this site is the installation of lighting and seating amenities, and markers at 10, 20 and 30 feet from the walls to help the neighbors assess what the walls will look like from various vantage points in their backyards. The neighbors will help determine the look of the walls on the side facing the neighborhood. The Aesthetic Advisory Committee (which includes BWNA member Linda Godinez) will help determine the appearance of the MoPac side of the sound walls. The Texas Historical Commission and the City of Austin Historic Preservation Officer, Steve Sadowsky, will help those neighborhoods in the Old West Austin Historic District (which includes Bryker Woods) to select wall styles compatible with the historic homes in the area. The tallest walls will be 12-14' in height, although there may be areas where taller walls are structurally possible and desired by the neighbors.

The Loop 1/MoPac Project has scheduled 13 noise workshops, open to everyone, in early 2008. For Bryker Woods, only those property owners with property abutting TxDOT's

Right-of-Way will vote on the sound walls. By Spring 2008 they expect to submit the environmental report to the Federal Highway Administration. A public hearing will be held in the fall of 2008. TxDOT will put the project out for bid in late spring 2009. The sound walls will be constructed first to minimize noise from managed lanes construction.

Phase 1 of Loop 1/MoPac Project is the current managed lane/sound wall project from Parmer Lane to the river. There will be a potential Phase 1b for MoPac south of the river. Phase 2 will be the long-term development of MoPac – what it needs to be 15-30 yrs out, which TxDOT hasn't yet begun to plan but what Bryker Woods may address in the City's official neighborhood planning process currently underway.

MoNAC (MoPac Neighborhood Associations Coalition) recently elected Kay Newell (kayn7@austin.rr.com) its new president. The MoNAC executive committee urges everyone to attend the noise workshops scheduled for 2008.

Please visit our neighborhood business advertisers, without their support this edition of the Bryker Woods Herald newsletter would not be possible!

Neighborhood Social Gatherings

Thanks to the help of several volunteers and neighborhood participation, the 4th of July parade was once again a resounding success. I think I counted over 200 people in the parade with kids and parents dressed in their 4th of July best. We even were fortunate to have a special treat for the kids-The Funbus. Our Neighborhood Association president, Edward Tasch, led the parade in his green vintage Jeep pickup through the streets of Bryker Woods and back to the school for bagels and coffee.

Our National Night Out event went great. Special thanks to Celeste Hubert and Sherry Renick for helping plan the event and Mike Adams for once again serving as the gracious host and cook. The Austin Fire Department and Police Department both stopped by. The event was a great opportunity to visit with new neighbors and old. We are planning to have the same events next year and possibly include more! For more information contact BWNA board member Cord Dover at cord.dover@sbcglobal.net

Thank you Bryker Woods Neighborhood

To the residents of Bryker Woods who contributed items for soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, the soldiers say “thank you.” Here is one of their notes:

“Please accept this thank you in behalf of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment. Your packages were a blessing for many. We appreciate the time, care and detail [the Bryker Woods Neighborhood] took in sending these packages, cards and letters.”

RP2 Sylvia Mata
Iraq, [stationed near Fallujah]

Thank you Bryker Woods for your generosity. Twenty-five packages were sent to four soldiers to be shared with their units.

Please visit our neighborhood business advertisers, without their support this edition of the Bryker-Woods Herald newsletter would not be possible!